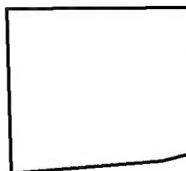


MEMORANDUM FOR: DDCI

Many thanks. I agree this is a good article
even if we didn't finance the strikes.



W. E. Nelson

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12 Nov 1974

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ROBERT MOSS on the implications of America's 'passion for disclosure'

THE fuss about CIA involvement in Chile has died down for the moment in Washington, but the chances are that, when Dr Kissinger returns from his present journeyings, he will find the issue still there to haunt him. Gen. Andropov, chief of the KGB, must be convulsed with laughter at the sight of so many American Senators and newspaper editors protesting that their country has no right to pursue any sort of covert foreign policy.

President Ford said the obvious when, in his attempt to justify the fact that the CIA spent \$8 million to support opposition parties and media under President Allende, he pointed out that the Russians were spending considerably more on such operations and tend to conduct them far more ruthlessly. It is only necessary to glance back over the past few years to see that the Russians have made a tremendous investment in intelligence activities in the effort to depose non-Communist régimes. Even in Latin America, which has always ranked low on their order of priorities, the Russians have been doing some very curious things.

In March, 1971, the Mexicans expelled five KGB officers, who had been masquerading as Soviet diplomats, because they had helped to finance and organise a guerrilla group called the Revolutionary Action Movement. A few months later, Ecuador expelled another three Russian officials for their role in funding the Marxist-dominated Confederation of Ecuadorian Workers which had used the money to organise a general strike originally planned to co-ordinate with a Left-wing coup.

In Chile, Russia's hand was obvious again, although, as in many similar cases, the CIA intelligence organisation, the G.I., served as Moscow's in-

Chile, the CIA and the Communists

strument. The DGI has now been completely colonised by the KGB and operates under the close surveillance of a KGB general in Havana. A DGI officer, Luis Fernández de Oña, occupied an office next to Allende's, reading his correspondence and screening his visitors. There was, it is true, a personal factor involved: he became Allende's son-in-law by marrying his daughter, "Tati," but it was more than a family affair.

The continuing inquest into the Chile affair is part of the malign legacy of Watergate and the Vietnam war. Both undermined the confidence of many Americans in the integrity of the Administration and have created an enormous bandwagon in favour of public supervision of every aspect of policy-making. They also created a passion for disclosure that now makes it impossible for anyone to assume that confidential information will be kept confidential.

One of the most dangerous aspects of the Chile affair is the way that the names of political parties, newspapers and radio stations and trade union organisations that are alleged to have received CIA funds have been bandied about.

If public hearings go further, the next step, no doubt, would be the naming of Chileans alleged to have had some relationship with the American Government. This would not only put them on the death

it would discourage people in other situations who might contemplate turning to the Americans, rather than Russians, for outside support.

The limits of the CIA involvement in Chile have been muddled beyond recognition. During the first months of Allende's government, before it became apparent that the Marxists in it were bent on a total seizure of power, the Americans experimented with a policy of conciliation. This was largely the work of Ambassador Korry, who, for example, tried to negotiate with Allende over the nationalisation of major American interests, such as the big copper companies. He actually offered Allende a deal that would have enabled the Chilean Government to pay compensation with official bonds underwritten by the American Treasury. The deal, however, was rejected by Allende after it was vetoed by the leader of the extremist wing of the Socialist party, Carlos Altamirano.

It was not the CIA funds that finally brought about the coup d'état in September last year. At best, they served to keep in being a number of newspapers that would otherwise have collapsed as a result of spiralling costs, declining advertising and frozen prices. Without that critical voice, and without the major strikes, also partly financed by the Americans, that served to demonstrate widespread hostility to the régime, the Marxists would not have found their road to power

much less stony. It was not in the power of the Americans, however, to bring together the broad range of political forces that united to topple the régime. A cynic might even say that the conclusive proof that the coup was not essentially the work of the CIA was that it worked so smoothly.

Perhaps it is not good enough for Americans, or America's allies, to conclude that what "our" side does is justified because the "other" side is doing the same, or worse. But when it is seriously proposed, as in two recent books on the CIA, that covert operations should never be licensed, it has to be pointed out that this would leave a tremendous vacuum in many areas the Communists would not be slow to exploit. The things that were done in Chile would have provoked little comment if they had been done to oppose Hitler, or, for that matter, the Soviet régime (although, in the latter case, there might have been complaints about the threat to détente). Yet it often seems that it is only when the Communists have won that people realise that they had been on the way to winning.

Russia remains an expansionist power—and its chances for further expansion, given the effects of the oil crisis, the rising strength of the Marxist Left in southern Europe and the prospect of a new phase of American isolationism, are probably greater now than at any time since the immediate post-1945 period. The Americans and their allies are increasingly on the defensive.

The Americans exerted themselves, to a fairly minimal extent, in what was seen as an attempt to prevent Chile becoming a part of that expansionist bloc. There is no reason, in present conditions, why that should be regarded as a monstrous—or immoral—thing to do.